

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A gaming method, comprising:
 - receiving a fee from a player to play in a tournament;
 - 5 receiving data indicative of a gaming unit on which the player has chosen to play in the tournament;
 - after the player has chosen the gaming unit, loading gaming software to the chosen gaming unit, wherein the gaming software is to configure the chosen gaming unit for playing in the tournament;
 - 10 enabling the chosen gaming unit for playing in the tournament;
 - determining a winning player of the tournament, if any; and
 - if the winning player of the tournament is determined, generating data indicative of a value payout to be awarded to the winning player.
- 15 2. A gaming method according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining whether the chosen gaming unit is already configured for playing in the tournament; and
 - wherein loading gaming software to the chosen gaming unit comprises loading gaming software to the chosen gaming unit only if the gaming unit is not already
 - 20 configured for playing in the tournament.
3. A gaming method according to claim 1, wherein loading gaming software to the chosen gaming unit comprises transmitting the gaming software to the gaming unit via a network.
- 25 4. A gaming method according to claim 1, wherein loading gaming software to the chosen gaming unit comprises loading the gaming software from at least one of a floppy disk, a CD-ROM, a DVD, a PC card, a smart card, and a portable memory device.

5. A gaming method according to claim 1, further comprising confirming that the gaming software was loaded to the gaming unit successfully.

5 6. A gaming method according to claim 1, further comprising authenticating the gaming software after loading the gaming software to the gaming unit.

7. A gaming method according to claim 1, wherein the gaming software
10 comprises an executable file.

8. A gaming method according to claim 1, wherein the gaming software comprises a configuration file.

15 9. A gaming method according to claim 1, wherein the gaming software comprises a data file.

10. A gaming method according to claim 1, wherein the gaming software comprises a pay table.

20

11. A gaming method according to claim 1, wherein the gaming software comprises a plurality of seeds for a random number generator to be implemented by the gaming unit.

25 12. A gaming method according to claim 11, further comprising randomly or pseudo-randomly generating the plurality of seeds.

13. A gaming method according to claim 1, further comprising, if a plurality of winning players are determined, generating data indicative of a plurality of respective value payouts to be awarded to the plurality of winning players, wherein the plurality of respective value payouts comprises a plurality of shares of a jackpot.

14. A tournament server, comprising:
- a network interface operatively coupled to a network;
- a controller operatively coupled to the network interface, the controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to the processor, the
- 5 controller configured to:
- receive an indication, via the network interface, that a fee to play in a tournament was paid by a player;
- receive, via the network interface, data indicative of a gaming unit on which the player has chosen to play in the tournament;
- 10 after receiving the data indicative of the chosen gaming unit, load gaming software to the chosen gaming unit via the network, wherein the gaming software configures the chosen gaming unit for playing in the tournament;
- enable the gaming unit for playing in the tournament;
- 15 determine a winning player of the tournament, if any; and
- if the winning player of the tournament is determined, generate data indicative of a value payout to be awarded to the winning player.
15. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the controller is
- 20 further configured to:
- determine whether the chosen gaming unit is already configured for playing in the tournament; and
- load gaming software to the chosen gaming unit only if the gaming unit is not already configured for playing in the tournament.
- 25
16. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the controller is further configured to confirm that the gaming software was loaded to the gaming unit successfully.

17. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the controller is further configured to authenticate the gaming software loaded to the gaming unit.

18. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the gaming
5 software comprises an executable file.

19. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the gaming software comprises a configuration file.

10 20. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the gaming software comprises a data file.

21. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the gaming software comprises a pay table.

15

22. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the gaming software comprises a plurality of seeds for a random number generator to be implemented by the gaming unit.

20 23. A tournament server according to claim 22, wherein the controller is further configured to randomly or pseudo-randomly generate the plurality of seeds.

24. A tournament server according to claim 14, wherein the controller is further configured to transmit a plurality of indicators of outcomes of games to the
25 gaming unit.

25. A tournament server, comprising:
- a network interface operatively coupled to a network;
- a controller operatively coupled to the network interface, the controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to the processor, the
- 5 controller configured to:
- receive an indication that a fee to play in a tournament was paid by a player;
- enable a gaming unit for playing in the tournament, wherein the gaming unit is chosen by the player, wherein gaming software is loaded to the
- 10 gaming unit after the player has chosen the gaming unit, and wherein the gaming software configures the gaming unit for playing in the tournament;
- determine a winning player of the tournament, if any; and
- if the winning player of the tournament is determined, generate data indicative of a value payout to be awarded to the winning player.
- 15
26. A tournament server according to claim 25, wherein the controller is further configured to confirm that the gaming software was loaded to the gaming unit successfully.
- 20
27. A tournament server according to claim 25, wherein the controller is further configured to authenticate the gaming software after loading the gaming software to the gaming unit.
28. A tournament server according to claim 25, wherein the gaming
- 25 software comprises an executable file.
29. A tournament server according to claim 25, wherein the gaming software comprises a configuration file.

30. A tournament server according to claim 25, wherein the gaming software comprises a data file.

31. A tournament server according to claim 25, wherein the gaming
5 software comprises a pay table.

32. A tournament server according to claim 25, wherein the gaming software comprises a plurality of seeds for a random number generator to be implemented by the gaming unit.

10

33. A tournament server according to claim 32, wherein the controller is further configured to randomly or pseudo-randomly generate the plurality of seeds.

34. A tournament server according to claim 25, wherein the controller is
15 further configured to transmit a plurality of indicators of outcomes of games to the gaming unit.